

UTAH DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY

195 North 1950 West
PO Box 144870
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4870

Willard Bay Project Proposal Form

NOTE: Proposal must be no longer than 6 pages. Supplemental documents such as letters of support, information to demonstrate previous project implementation and other relative supportive documents may be submitted in addition to this form.

Applicant Name: Blair Stringham/Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Co-Applicant Name(s) (if applicable):

Project Title: Fee Title Land Acquisition

Agency or Business Name (if applicable): Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Mailing Address: 1594 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-6301

Phone: (801)-538-4781 E-mail:blairstringham@utah.gov

Individual Non-Profit **Govt. Agency** Academic Commercial Other

1. Estimated Project Costs:

Labor \$7,000 (appraisal)

Materials \$1,993,000.00

Equipment \$ 0

Administration \$

Miscellaneous \$ 0

TOTAL \$2,000,000

Other sources of project funding:

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources \$1,000,000

Source Amount

The actual project cost may vary depending upon the appraisal value, landowner negotiations, and the varying amounts that different funding partners may provide towards the acquisition. UDWR is seeking \$1,000,000 to help acquire this property (a little less than \$3,000/acre), but actual funding need may be less than this amount. Having UDWQ as a funding partner would assist UDWR in acquiring additional partners.

Total project cost including other sources of funding: \$2,000,000

(please include bids for labor, equipment, rentals, etc.)

2. Describe the purpose and need of the project:

The Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area (SCWMA) is a 5,496 acre wetland/upland plant community complex owned and managed by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) in Box Elder County, Utah. The property is used to provide important wetland habitats to migratory waterfowl and shorebirds, while also providing recreational opportunities such as hunting and bird watching.

The SCWMA is surrounded by private property. Currently, private agricultural crops and pasturelands are adjacent to the east border of the SCWMA. A portion of the south boundary is agricultural cropland. The

remainder of south, all of the west and portions of the north boundaries are privately held wetland/upland plant communities. The remainder of the north boundary is adjacent to pasture and agricultural croplands. One parcel west of SCWMA is owned by an estate and has been identified for potential fee title acquisition: the Fronk property. This property was identified in the UDWR internal document, "Wildlife Habitat 30 Year Land Acquisition Plan for Salt Creek and Public Shooting Grounds Waterfowl Management Areas (2004-2034)". This 700+ acre acquisition would expand SCWMA to the west, and protect important emergent marsh, wet meadow, upland/grassland and open water habitats.

It is difficult to predict or foresee what future threats may remove this land from its current status. Expansion of the human population, change in agricultural demands and products, increased demand and/or reduction of available water, or water quality degradation could all have adverse effects on this land, the way it is being used and on the wildlife that currently benefit from the existing land condition. The large pond on the south-east portion of the property is an extension of a wetland pond found on SCWMA, and UDWR has gained verbal support from the landowners that they will manage this pond in conjunction with UDWR. Currently, the pond is known as "Rest Lake" and is managed as a waterfowl rest area during the hunting seasons. This restriction has been in place for over 30 years as part of the WMA rest area, even though nearly 50% of the pond is privately owned. Unfortunately, the continued closure of the private land is in jeopardy due to a family consideration to create a private hunting club for financial gain. This likely could reduce the value of the traditional Rest Lake function. With the acquisition of this property, these habitats will be protected and will become contiguous with Salt Creek WMA. The property will provide recreational opportunities for the public and will be specifically managed for wildlife.

These lands are located near, but out of the flood plain of the Great Salt Lake and are critical to wetland wildlife species that are displaced when GSL lake levels rise to levels experienced in the mid 1980's. This cyclic nature of a closed basin lake system could occur again in the future. Having protected wetlands and adjacent uplands managed specifically for wildlife can help mitigate impacts from Great Salt Lake water level fluctuations. If acquired, the function and purpose of the Rest Lake can be maintained.

While not a primary purchase of the acquisition, water quality would improve with a better grazing management plan. DWR ownership of the property, and maintenance and enhancement of the wetlands, is a long-term benefit to water quality as the wetlands contribute to water percolation into the groundwater aquifer and subsequent comingling with other waters in Willard Spur.

3. Estimated time frame of the project with significant milestones (Note: Project must be completed with final reports filed by January 1, 2018):

Estimated Appraisal Completion Time: 3 months

Estimated Final Completion Time: December 30, 2015

4. Describe the location of the project with attached location map, including details on the total area that will be directly enhanced by the project: ATTACH MAPS.

Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area (SCWMA) is a 5,496 acre wetland/upland plant community complex owned and managed by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) in Box Elder County, Utah. This acquisition would add approximately 700+ acres to the WMA and would provide State of Utah ownership of the majority of the Rest Lake pond. It would provide additional recreational opportunities for hunters and bird watchers. (See the attached maps for more information)

Water resources on the property also include approximately 175 acres of emergent marsh wetlands and wet meadow, 35 acres of mudflat/vegetated playa, and 120 acres of open water habitats. There are approximately 370 acres of uplands.

5. Describe how the project will specifically enhance and protect waterways affected by the Willard Bay diesel release and improve the conditions of one or more of the following: wildlife, habitat, natural vegetation, water quality or emergency response:

The waters that flow through this land and the adjoining Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area, and subsequently into Public Shooting Grounds Waterfowl Management Area to the south, do not come in contact with waters associated with Willard Bay until they reach the Bear River Bay of the Great Salt Lake. Ground water recharge is the most likely positive impact from these waters in the area.

This property supports a complex mosaic of wetland habitats that are interspersed with upland habitats. Several of the wetland habitats found on the property, emergent marsh, wet meadow, and standing water (lentic), were identified as 3 of the top 10 habitats of conservation concern in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (2001-2015) (a.k.a., the Utah Wildlife Action Plan). Respectively, these habitats comprise 0.2%, <0.1% and 3.4% of the land area within Utah. These habitat types face similar threats which include: direct loss of habitat; fragmentation; draining; water development scenarios which reduce water supply to the wetlands; drought conditions; improper grazing practices; invasive plant species; improper ATV use; and loss of adjacent uplands. These habitats also support high numbers of wildlife as they support 176 species (wetland-emergent marsh), 201 species (wet meadow), and 165 species (standing water). Permanent protection of this property will protect additional acres of these critical habitat types and support a myriad of wildlife species.

Due to the property location adjacent to the SCWMA and within the Great Salt Lake ecosystem, many species of waterbirds (waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds) can be found using the property throughout the year, depending upon water presence. In addition, during high water years when marshes immediately adjacent to the Great Salt Lake are inundated with salt and brackish waters (ie, during the 1980's), the emergent marsh, wet meadow, and open water habitats on this property were some of the few wetland habitats in the area available to wildlife.

Wildlife will benefit into perpetuity with State of Utah ownership and management of this land. Water rights currently assigned to the UDWR that flow through this area will be maintained and could be used to further enhance the existing wetlands. Weed control will be a management priority and livestock grazing will be used as a tool to manage vegetation for wildlife, rather than the primary land use.

In addition, the wetland and upland habitats on the property are proposed to be enhanced and restored to provide a greater diversity of plant species, thus further enhancing the property's value for wildlife. The property provides waterfowl nesting and foraging habitat, provides important wetland habitats for a wide variety of non-game wildlife species, and expands the currently protected lands at SCWMA, thereby protecting a larger area of critical wildlife habitat.

While the acquisition of this property will not specifically enhance or protect waters affected by the Willard Bay diesel spill as this water would have entered Willard Bay, it would be permanently protecting lands within the Bear River Bay ecosystem of the Great Salt Lake. Protection of this land would assure its value for wildlife would be maintained in perpetuity and would somewhat offset the temporal loss of and damage to wildlife habitats affected by the diesel spill.

While not a primary purpose of the acquisition, water quality would improve with a better grazing management plan. DWR ownership of the property, and maintenance and enhancement of the wetlands, is a long-term benefit to water quality as the wetlands contribute to water percolation into the groundwater aquifer and subsequent comingling with other waters in Willard Bay.

6. Describe project's connectivity to other natural areas or projects that further enhance wildlife, habitat, natural vegetation, water quality or emergency response:

This land parcel is connected to several other natural and protected areas within the Great Salt Lake ecosystem. It is adjacent to the Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area, which is a 5,496 acre wetland-upland complex. The waters that flow through this property, then flow into the adjoining Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area, and subsequently flow south into the adjacent 11,758 acre wetland-upland complex known as Public Shooting Grounds Waterfowl Management Area. This water then flows into the 70,000+ acre Bear River Migratory Refuge located in Bear River Bay of the Great Salt Lake. The contiguous location of these three permanently protected management areas and refuges adjacent to and within the Great Salt Lake, provides over 87,000 acres of interspersed wetland and upland habitats. This acreage provides critical habitat for a myriad of wildlife species. The tremendous value of this area for wildlife, particularly for waterbirds (waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds) was recognized by The Audubon Society in 2008 when it nominated and accepted the Bear River Bay (including the SCWMA area) as a Globally Recognized Important Bird Area. (<http://netapp.audubon.org/iba/Site/1965>)

The Fronk property is also part of a natural low depression located in northern Box Elder County where return irrigation water and precipitation collect, and then flow south to the Great Salt Lake. Man-made dikes and natural depressions create a mosaic of open water and emergent marsh habitats surrounded by wet meadow, grassland and agricultural lands. Acquisition of this property should continue to protect the primary water quality functions of the property.

7. Describe any additional social benefits of implementing this project:

Public access for wildlife viewing and hunting will be allowed on the majority of the land. A portion of the land will be subject to no hunting and no trespass restrictions to provide an undisturbed area for waterfowl and water birds during the nesting and hunting seasons. This is a restriction that has been in place for many years as part of the WMA rest area even though nearly 50% of the pond is privately owned.

8. Project plans and details, including rights to work on specified piece of land:

This project is for an appraisal and fee title acquisition of the Fronk property. UDWR personnel have been in contact with the property owners over the past 10 years, and the family desires to sell the land to UDWR.

If this project is approved for funding, UDWR will contract for a property appraisal and will then enter into negotiations with the landowner. Additional funding partners will continue to be sought.

9. Describe your experience in implementing projects of similar scope and magnitude:

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has acquired and protected thousands of acres of wetland habitats around the Great Salt Lake since the 1930's. UDWR has the personnel and programs in place to implement land acquisition and habitat restoration activities, particularly within the Great Salt Lake wetland ecosystem.

10. Describe how ongoing maintenance of the project will be funded and carried out:

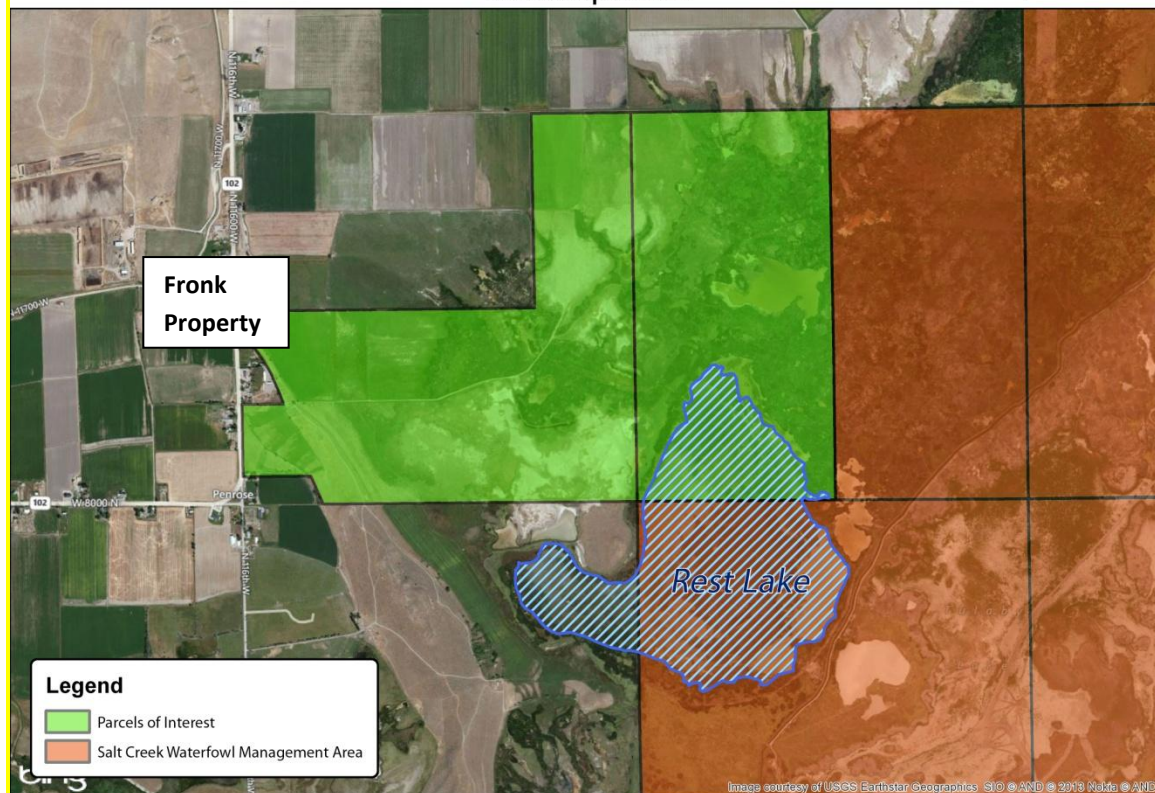
Ongoing general maintenance of the property (items such as fence maintenance and weed spraying) should be minimal and will be funded through the current annual operating budget of the SCWMA. However, funding for special projects or large maintenance needs will be submitted as habitat project proposals to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Habitat Council for funding consideration.

11. List consultants or agency partners that have participated in project development (below):

None

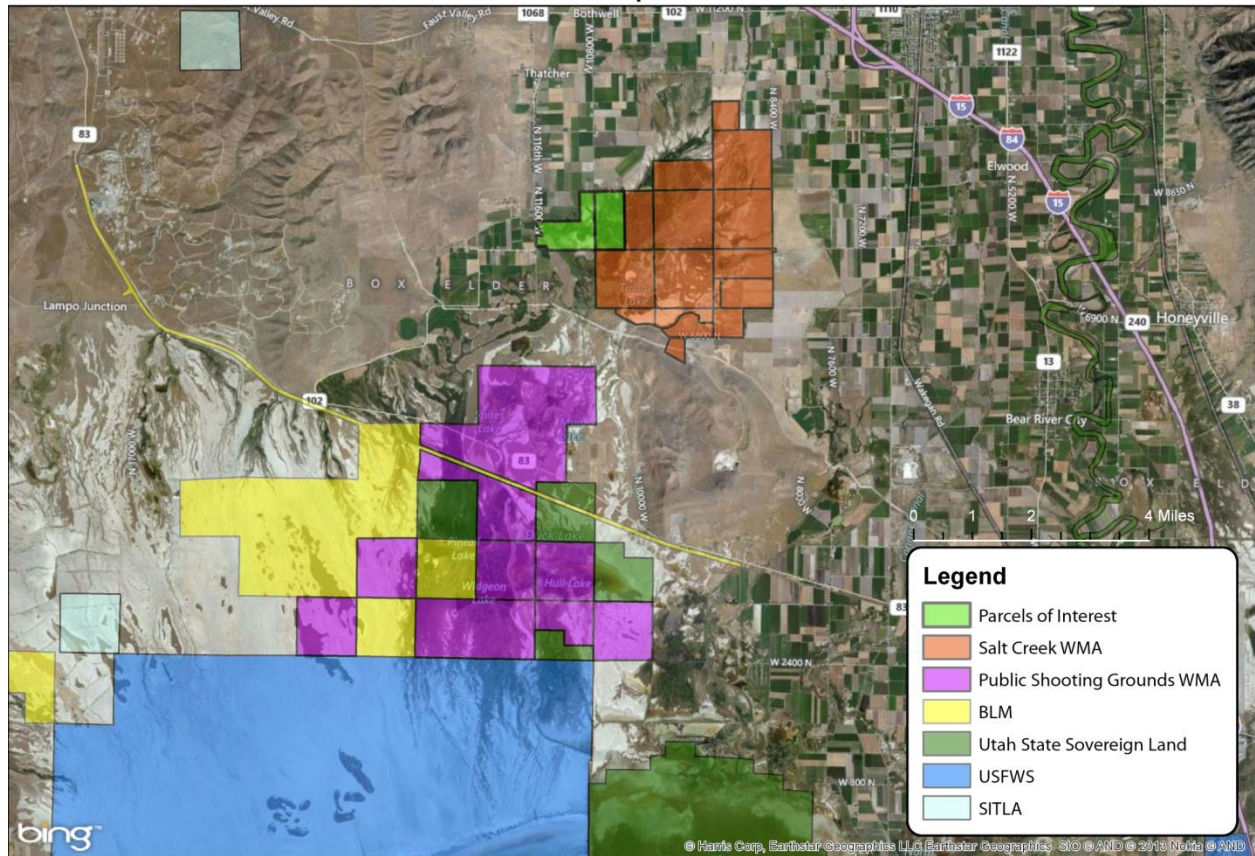


Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area Land Acquisition





Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area Land Acquisition





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge
2155 West Forest Street
Brigham City, Utah 84302



FWS-14-009
May 2, 2014

Randy Berger
Manager Salt Creek WMA
8475 North 11600 West
Tremonton, UT 84337

Ms. Emily Bartusek
Utah Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Water Quality
PO Box 144870
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

The Mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The State of Utah and Salt Creek WMA have been essential partners to Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge approves of land acquisition by the State of Utah on Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area's western border.

This parcel of 700 acres that borders Salt Creek Wetland Management Area has open water, emergent marsh and uplands. The addition of this parcel to SCWMA would allow for a large resting unit for migrating waterfowl while also providing hunting opportunities to the public. Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge supports SCWMA land acquisition proposal for the benefit of migratory birds and the American people.

Sincerely,

Sharen *Up* (Acting)

Bob Barrett, Project Leader Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge





April 24, 2014

TO: Utah Department of Environmental Quality: Division of Water Quality

SUBJECT: Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Land Acquisition near Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area

FOWL MINDED is a Utah based organization committed to the conservation, preservation, and improvement of Utah's waterfowl and upland game habitat. FOWL MINDED would like to express its support of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) project to acquire additional wildlife habitat bordering Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area (SCWMA). This area is a vital location for a variety of wildlife species. Expansion of the human population, change in agricultural demands and products, increased demand and/or reduction of available water, or water quality degradation could all have adverse effects on this land, the way it is being used and on the wildlife that currently benefit from the existing land condition. With the acquisition of this property, these habitats will be protected and will become contiguous with Salt Creek WMA. The property will provide recreational opportunities for the public and will be specifically managed for wildlife.

SCWMA is designated Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site. SCWMA provides critical migration and breeding habitat for numerous waterfowl, shorebirds, and waterbirds. Any effort to conserve this valuable resource is a worthy activity that FOWL MINDED fully supports.

FOWL MINDED has a history of partnership and collaboration with UDWR on wetland enhancement projects. FOWL MINDED has worked closely with UDWR on multiple wildlife conservation and habitat projects throughout Utah. This project will deliver long-term protection, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands and wetland-associated upland habitat. FOWL MINDED is pleased to support the UDWR on their efforts to enhance wetland habitats on Harold Crane.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn McLachlan".

Shawn McLachlan
President of FOWL MINDED

FOWL MINDED
2887 West 12075 South, Riverton, UT 84065
801-598-6026



May 4, 2014

To whom it may concern:

The Utah Airboat Association would like to lend its support in behalf of the DWR's efforts to acquire an additional 700 acres on the west side of Salt Creek WMA. The acquisition of this acreage would be a tremendous asset to the WMA and to the public users that would benefit from it. This area would allow some public access to areas that have been privately held and inaccessible for hunters, birdwatchers, and others that enjoy Utah's wildlife.

Our organization is made up of people from many different walks of life, but the common thread that unites us is that we all love and enjoy our public lands. This proposed acquisition falls perfectly in line with the kind of WMA management that we fully support.

Sincerely,

Kerry McCloud

President

Utah Airboat Association



Utah Mud Motor Association
Utah Bowfishing Association
1341 North 325 East
Layton, UT 84041
(801)721-0297
www.utahmudmotor.com
www.utahbowfishing.com

April 28, 2014

To whom it may concern:

As the active President of the Utah Mud Motor Association and the Utah Bowfishing Association, I'm writing on behalf of the UDWR's effort in the acquisition of land on the west side of the Salt Creek WMA. I've personally witnessed the positive transformation of Salt Creek WMA while Randy and his staff have been in power. Some of these great projects include: dyke reconstruction, phragmites removal, and many other positive projects that make Salt Creek what it is today. These projects benefit both an unsurpassable amount of wildlife and provides sportsmen, and outdoor enthusiasts a place to escape, while working hard to preserve and protect the very land that provides such resources. Randy's motivation, follow through, and management practices have undoubtedly made Salt Creek WMA a resource worth fighting for, and we fully support his current and future efforts.

Sincerely,

Josh Noble

Utah Bowfishing Association President
Utah Mud Motor Association President

Willard Peak Chapter of Delta Waterfowl Foundation



To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to serve as my support and recommendation for a purchase Randy Berger, the manager of the Salt Creek WMA of the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources has submitted.

We at Delta Waterfowl feel confident that the purchase of land adjacent to the Salt Creek WMA is a worthwhile venture as it will provide incremental public hunting access and provide an improved marsh for the waterfowl that will utilize it. This land will be well cared for and will be an additional gem for the public to enjoy and help care for. I have had the privilege of working with Randy and other volunteers on multiple projects over the last 4 years. I have worked with him on habitat projects and cleanup projects of 2 of the WMA's he oversees. I have also seen his work in the development and improvement of the marshes, impoundments, and the continuing fight with invasive species such as phragmites.

We hope you will strongly consider this request.

Sincerely,

Jeff Adams
Chairman, Willard Peak Chapter
Delta Waterfowl
Brigham City, UT.



DUCKS UNLIMITED
WORLD LEADER IN WETLANDS CONSERVATION



Dear Randy Berger; Salt Creek Waterfowl manager,

This letter is in support for the land aquisition for the 700 hundred acres that border the Salt Creek Waterfowl area to the west.

This property represents a great mix of ecosystems that support waterfowl in our Great Basin Flyway, with upland, wetland and a huge body of water for resting opportunity during migration.

This is also a great chance to increase public land use for all outdoorsmen in Box Elder county and Utah.

We urge that all interested parties, actively pursue this property aquisition to increase the Salt Creek Waterfowl management area for the overall improvement of waterfowl propagation, upland and waterfowl hunting opportunities for outdoorsmen.

We are a active Ducks Unlimited chapter UT0019, that support the Salt Creek WMA with our chapter monies and support a Youth Waterfowl cookout on the WMA on the Utah State wide youth waterfowl day.

This land aquasition will increase the opportunity for all Utah sportsmen and we support this opportunity!

Sincerely

John T. Hurley
Bear River Valley Ducks Unlimited Chairman



Wasatch Audubon Society

PO Box 3211, Ogden, UT 84409

May 2, 2014

Randy Berger
Manager Salt Creek WMA
8475 North 11600 West
Tremonton, UT 84337

Ms. Emily Bartusek
Utah Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Water Quality
PO Box 144870
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

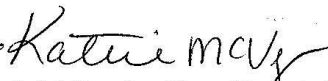
Subject: Support for land acquisition by Salt Creek WMA

As president and on behalf of the Board of Directors of Wasatch Audubon Society, I support the acquisition of land on Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area's western border by the State of Utah.

Wasatch Audubon Society was founded in 1982 by a small group of community members from all walks of life whose purpose was to foster a better understanding and appreciation of birds in this area. Our goals include conservation of species and habitat, and encouraging members of the community to learn more about the birds and wildlife whose habitat we share. For many years we have assisted with the state run Swan Day and Eagle Day on Compton's Knoll at Salt Creek WMA sharing our knowledge and sightings with visitors.

We recognize the importance of Salt Creek WMA in providing important nesting, resting and feeding areas for a diverse group of birds; as well as an area for birding and other wildlife recreation. The addition of nearly 700 acres to Salt Creek WMA would allow for the continuation of a large resting unit for migrating waterfowl during the fall hunting season. Furthermore, increasing Salt Creek's holdings to include more upland habitat has the potential to benefit other birds of conservation concern in Utah including: Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum*, Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* and Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*.

For purposes of wildlife and habitat conservation, we support Salt Creek WMA's proposal for land acquisition.

Sincerely, 
Katie McVey, President, Wasatch Audubon Society